

REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed April 20, 2005, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

Claims 1, 2, 4-8 and 10-39 have been examined. By this amendment, Applicant cancels claims 14 and 31 without prejudice or disclaimer, amends claims 12, 15 and 25, and adds claims 40-52. As a result, claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-13, 15-30 and 32-52 are pending, of which claims 1, 10, 12, 25, 40, 41, 42, 46, 48 and 49 are independent.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10 and 11, and in claims 14-16, 18, 21-24, 29-31, 33 and 36-39 if rewritten in independent form.

1. Claims 12-24 Are in Condition for Allowance

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as purportedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,330,971 (Mabry) and U.S. Patent No. 6,340,932 (Rodgers). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As noted in the Office Action (Paragraph 2), claim 14 stands objected-to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant has amended claim 12 to include all of the limitations of claim 14.

In view of the foregoing, claim 12 patentably distinguishes over the art of record, including Mabry and Rodgers. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 12 under §103(a) be withdrawn. Claims 13 and 15-24 each depend from claim 12 and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 13, 17, 19 and 20 be withdrawn.

2. Claims 25-30 and 32-39 Are in Condition for Allowance

Claim 25 stands rejected under §103(a) as purportedly being unpatentable over Mabry and Rodgers. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As noted in the Office Action (Paragraph 2), claim 31 stands objected-to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 31 depends directly from claim 25. Applicant has amended claim 25 to include, generally, all of the

limitations recited in claim 31. Please note that Applicant has not copied the limitations from claim 31 verbatim, but has made some amendments to improve the clarity of claim 25.

In view of the foregoing, claim 25 patentably distinguishes over the art of record, including Mabry and Rodgers. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 25 under Section 103(a) be withdrawn. Claims 26-30 and 32-39 each depend from claim 25 and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 26-28, 32, 34 and 35 under §103(a) be withdrawn.

3. New Claims 40-52 Are in Condition for Allowance

The Office Action states that claim 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 12. Accordingly, Applicant has added claim 40, which reflects claim 16 amended to include, generally, all of the limitations of claim 12, with additional amendments for clarity.

The Office Action states that claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of base claim 12 and intervening claim 17. Accordingly, Applicant has added claim 41, which reflects claim 18 amended to include all of the limitations of claims 12 and 17.

The Office Action states that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 12. In response, Applicant has added claim 42, which reflects claim 21 amended to include all of the limitations of claim 12. Further, Applicant has added claims 43, 44 and 45, which depend from claim 42 and reflect the limitations of claims 22, 23 and 24, respectively, which depend from claim 21.

The Office Action states that claim 29 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 25. Accordingly, Applicant has added claim 46, which reflects claim 29 amended to include all of the limitations of claim 25. Applicant has also added claim 47, which depends from new claim 46 and reflects the limitations of claim 29, which depends from claim 25.

The Office Action states that claim 33 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 25 and intervening claim 32. Accordingly, Applicant has added claim 48, which reflects claim 33 amended to include all of the limitations of claims 25 and 32.

The Office Action states that claim 36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 25. In response, Applicant has added claim

49, which reflects claim 36 amended to include all of the limitations of claim 25. Further, Applicant has added claims 50, 51 and 52, which depend from claim 49 and reflect claims 37, 38 and 39, respectively, which depend from claim 36.

In view of the foregoing, new claims 40-52 patentably distinguishes over the art of record, including Mabry and Rodgers.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

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Docket No.: S1022.80567US00
Date: August 9, 2005